

Introduction: The God who is Creator, Redeemer and King is both gracious and forgiving of our disobedience. Both of these qualities flow from His strong life-giving, life-changing LOVE. *** The more we know of God from hearing His Word, which tells of His character and instructs us how we can live as His grateful children, the more we realize every person but One is flawed. Still, God gives gracious gifts, talents and wisdom to people in spite of their flaws. Solomon is one example of this truth about God. *** The opening words of our chapter tell how Solomon disobeyed two requirements of the Torah kings of Israel were to obey: he took an idol-worshipping wife from Egypt and he disregarded the words in the Torah he had written out for himself to review every day (*Deuteronomy 17:14-20*). Furthermore, he sacrificed burnt offerings without a priest using the altar of an idol on a high place outside Jerusalem where his father David had placed the Ark of the Covenant (*1 Chronicles 15-16*). *** In spite of this, The Covenant God, Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream at night at the very high place of the idol altar. Then He commanded Solomon to ask for a gift from Him. To Solomon's credit, he remembers the relationship David had with Yahweh: how he responded to His great LOVE by living in His truth and righteousness. Solomon also acknowledges his youth, ignorance and the enormity of his calling. So, he asks to be given a hearing heart to understand good from evil to judge God's people. Soon after this, a difficult case is brought to him. He acts with wisdom from God that all the people of Israel acknowledge. By God's gracious gift to a flawed young king, he did God's will on earth.

Those with God's wisdom know and do His will

Let's now dig deeper into The Word of God to better understand His grace to citizens of His Kingdom.

I. God said Solomon could ask what to be given, he asked to understand between good and evil;

when two women came about their sons, Solomon judged with the wisdom of God. (*1 Kings 3:4-9, 16-28*)

A. After Solomon worshipped God, God commanded him in a dream to ask for a gift; and, he requested a hearing heart to understand between good and evil to judge the people. (*1 Kings 3:4-9*)

1. The king sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings on the altar on the high place at Gibeon. (*Verse 4*)

High place: Gibeon is five miles northeast of Jerusalem and means 'hill city'. The false 'god' of storms, Baal, was worshipped at high places (*Numbers 22:41*)

Burnt offering: To fully burn one thousand bulls on one altar would take about forty days. But, through Moses, God told His people that only a priest could burn this offering on the altar at the Tabernacle (*Leviticus 1*). Wrong man in wrong place!

2. Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream that night, and God said, 'Ask what I will give to you'. (*Verse 5*)

God: Almighty God speaks to Solomon because the way he offered the sacrifice broke His covenant.

3. Solomon said, 'You have done great LOVE to my father who lived before You in uprightness of heart; and, You have kept this great LOVE when You gave him a son sitting on his throne'. (*Verse 6*)

Strong love: Solomon acknowledges God's gracious gift of strong LOVE to David.

His life: Before the double sin with Uriah, David walked in the truth and righteousness of God.

Kept strong love: Even after David's great sin, God maintains His great LOVE, keeping His Word to him by raising up Solomon to establish him (*2 Samuel 7:8-16*).

4. My God, You made me king and I am young, I do not know to go out and come in, Your servant is in the midst of a multitude of people: give Your servant a hearing heart to judge Your people, to understand between good and evil, because who is able to judge Your great people. (*Verses 7-9*)

Youth: Solomon described himself with a word for people up to twenty years old.

NOT know: He acknowledges his ignorance that led to the mixed burnt offerings he just offered.

Hearing: So, he requests a heart that is always hearing God's Word to obey it whole-heartedly.

Understand: He wants to understand what God says about good and evil to do what is good.

Humble fear: May we have Solomon's heart of humble fear to realize the ways we live contrary to God's will in His Word, and then pray to receive forgiveness in Jesus to do His will.

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B. Then two harlots came to him with a dispute over a dead and a living newborn son; and, Solomon devised a way to judge so all knew he had the wisdom of God. (*1 Kings 3:16-28*)

1. Then two harlots came and stood before the king and one woman said, 'My lord, I and this woman are dwelling in the same house and I gave birth to a child. (*Verses 16-17*)

Harlots: Two women who were harlots and shared a house came to Solomon.

My lord: As the first woman narrates her story she addresses the king as her lord.

One delivered a child: The one talking gave birth in the house they shared.

2. Then three days after my delivery this woman gave birth to a child, only us in the house; then this woman's son died, she had laid on him in the night, then she took my son while your maidservant slept, laid him in her bosom and laid her dead son in my bosom; I rose in the morning to nurse my son, and behold he was dead, when I considered him, he was not my child. (*Verses 18-21*)

Two births: She says she lived with only one other harlot and they both gave birth within three days.

One death: The other woman smothered her son with her body weight in the night.

Deception: She switched the newborn sons to deceive her housemate into thinking her son died.

NOT mine: But the first woman said by careful examination in the morning the dead son was not hers.

3. The other woman said: ‘No! For the son of me living, and the son of you dead’; and this one said: ‘No! For the son of you dead, and the son of me living’; and they spoke before the king. (*Verse 22*)
Language: The two women use the same words, but the mother of the dead son begins with herself and the mother of the living son begins with the other woman.
4. The king said, ‘This is saying, “This my son living and the son of you dead”; and the other is saying, “No! For the son of you dead and the son of me living”’. (*Verse 23*)
Comment: Solomon quotes the two women, but slightly modifies the first words of the ‘other woman’.
5. The king says, ‘Get me a sword ... divide the living child in two’. (*Verses 24-25*)
Command: Solomon proposes to act to resolve the dispute and his servants give him what he needs.
6. Compassion warmed the woman of the living child who said, ‘My lord, give her the living child, in no way slay him!’; but the other said, ‘Alike to me and alike to you, he shall not be – divide!’ (*Verse 26*)
Mother love: The mother love of the first woman moves her to give her son away so he will live.
My lord: As in the beginning, she addresses king Solomon as her lord.
Other: Every word of the second woman stinks of hatred for her fellow prostitute and her son.
7. The king said, ‘Give her the living child. You will in no way kill him. She is the mother’; then all Israel heard the judgment of the king and feared him for they saw God’s wisdom in him to do justice. (*Verses 27-28*)
Judgment: What Solomon did, judging what is right and then acting on it, is the wisdom of God.
Fear-wisdom: May we all follow through on the gifts God has given us so we will live doing what is good, acting in wisdom. It comes through God’s Word which helps us to know Him and His will.

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II. Jesus commands His disciples to pray this way: address The Father and make three requests concerning how people relate to Him. (*Matthew 6:9-10*)

- A. Because of His prior teaching, Jesus commands His followers to pray a certain way. (*Verses 9a-b*)
 1. Therefore in this way ... (*Verse 9a*)
Context: Jesus had just said His followers should not pray in public (*verse 5*) nor by babbling many words (*verse 7*), but in secret (*verse 6*) because their Father knows what they need (*verse 8*).
How: Jesus now gets positive and will tell them how to pray.
 2. ... you must pray. (*Verse 9b*)
Must: Jesus is commanding them to pray in the way He will now outline.
 - B. They are to address God as Father, request His holiness be revered, His Kingdom to come, and His will to be done everywhere. (*Verses 9c-10*)
 1. Father of us. (*Verse 9c*)
Relationship: They address God as their Father. They are in a relationship with Him, and each other.
 2. It must be made holy, The Name of Thee. (*Verse 9d*)
First petition: Father God is perfectly holy. This first petition is that those He has created will recognize Him as the awesome, holy and perfect God He is. In short we must fear God, and this is the beginning of wisdom (*Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 1:7*). May we all seek a greater fear of God through hearing His Word to obey the first petition of the prayer Jesus commanded us to pray, and to become wise.
- Title: *Wise people hear and fear God. (#1)*
3. It must come, The Kingdom of Thee. (*Verse 10a*)
Kingdom: This is a petition that The Father will enable and empower us by The Holy Spirit to obey Jesus’ last command to make disciples of all people (*Matthew 28:18-20*).
 4. It must happen, the will of Thee, as in heaven on earth. (*Verse 10b*)
God’s will: God’s will is discovered by always hearing His Word. It is that all will come to know Him.
John in heaven: John saw the end result of God’s will in the Revelation of Jesus that he saw in heaven, especially the final two visions (*Revelation 21-22*).
Jesus and Church: Today, God’s will is done through The Church of Jesus, as all in it follow Him. So we must pray for one another, as Jesus commanded, that together we will know and do God’s will as He builds His Kingdom through us.

Homiletical Idea: *Those with God’s wisdom know and do His will*

Conclusion: Despite Solomon’s flawed obedience, The Covenant God commanded him to ask for a gift from Him. Solomon then asked for a hearing heart and understanding between good and evil. Soon after this, Solomon judged a difficult case which caused all Israel to fear him because they saw God’s wisdom in him to do justice.

Homiletical Idea: *Those with God’s wisdom know and do His will*